Enhancing Franchisee Self-Determination with Digital Organizational Communication

A qualitative analysis of Franchisee Experiences and Digital Communication's Role in fostering autonomy

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Abstract

This study has investigated how franchisors can implement and adapt digital organizational communication with collaborative tools and communication theories to empower their franchisees, improve their self-determination and foster greater autonomy within the franchise system. The study was made possible by performing a qualitative analytical case study within a franchise company together with both franchisors and franchisees consisting of a total of 5 units and 8 participants, with the help of semi-structured interviews and the Free Listing-method.

The result shows that there is a lot of room for improvement for both franchisees and franchisors in terms of how a digital organizational communication should be implemented and adapted with the help of collaboration tools and communication theories, but that much also lies with the individuals themselves in greater inclusion, but also to enhance their self-determination and foster a greater autonomy to increase their intrinsic motivation within the franchise system. The study will try to convey the various ways that digital organization communication can be implemented within a franchise system, organizations or businesses.

Key words

Self-Determination Theory, Foggs Behavior Model, Employee engagement and motivation, Communication Theories, Digital Collaboration Tools
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1 Introduction

In times of external turmoil, such as economic inflation and pandemics, it is more crucial than ever to prioritize strong employee engagement both physically and digitally. Companies across industries are striving to survive and outperform fierce competition, recognizing the significance of the physical and mental well-being of their employees. It has been established that maintaining a high level of employee engagement is a key success factor during turbulent times (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2013). To achieve this, organizations should consider providing social support, recognition, and opportunities for learning and development (Saks, 2006). Franchise systems, characterized by a franchisor-franchisee relationship, are particularly well-suited for organizations that emphasize effective communication and require comprehensive support across multiple units (Verksamt, 2022). In a franchise system, franchisees invest in the franchisor's concept and gain the right to utilize the established framework while receiving ongoing support and guidance. Unlike other business models, geographical proximity between the franchisor and franchisee is not a prerequisite and franchisees are often located in different regions.

When for the franchise system operating in multiple locations, efficient and seamless digital communication becomes vital when face-to-face interactions are not feasible on a daily basis. Establishing quick and easy contact among units is essential. Therefore, franchise systems must focus on designing meaningful and relevant experiences for their employees with the help of collaborative tools and communication theories which will foster a sense of belonging and relatedness within the system. Creating a sense of belonging and fostering a strong connection within a system not only cultivates a purpose-driven work environment but also empowers employees to experience a greater sense of autonomy in their tasks and responsibilities. By incorporating these elements, motivation is cultivated within the employees and an open relationship to communication within the system becomes obvious. Encouraging employees to ask questions and seek assistance when they have uncertainties or require support, their sense of self-determination will gradually enhance.
1.1 Background and problematization

Boligheter is an interior design and franchise company with its main store located in Västervik, Sweden. Boligheter introduced their franchise concept Boligheter Franchise in 2018, with the long-term vision of expanding the business as a franchisor. Currently, they have 5 units established in different cities which are Borås, Skövde, Visby, Kungsbacka and Västervik. In a franchise system, there exists a franchisor and franchisee. The franchisor’s mission, as stated by Verksamh (2022), is to expand the business, while the franchisees are responsible for managing their respective units consistently with the other locations. Given the geographical distance between the units, it is crucial to establish effective collaboration and an adapted digital organizational communication within the organization. Additionally, it is important for franchisors to provide their franchisees to ensure an unified organizational culture along with established guidelines.

This study aims to identify the existing challenges and limitations in digital organizational communication within a particular franchise system, and propose effective solutions for improvement. Currently, the approach to digital organizational communication e.g. involves utilizing multiple channels for different purposes. Exposure and product styling can be achieved through various communication channels, such as email for sharing product images. Urgent questions may require a phone call, while regular inquiries can be sent through text messages. However, this has resulted in confusion regarding which communication channel should be used for specific questions within the organization, leading to misunderstandings and an overall lack of communication. This lack of communication can have detrimental effects, such as franchisees struggling to uphold the common thread they are required to maintain and franchisors being unable to preserve their concept. Therefore, it is crucial to address these issues by investigating the problem with the help of the RQ of this study, and create possible guidelines for future franchisors such as franchisees on how to act and include the units within a franchise system.

1.2 Purpose of study

The aim of this study is to investigate how franchisors can implement and adapt digital organizational communication with collaborative tools and communication theories to empower their franchisees, enhance their self-determination and foster greater autonomy within the franchise system. To achieve this objective, the study will utilize semi-structured qualitative interviews in combination with the Free Listing idea generation method as a qualitative analytical case study.
1.3 Research question - RQ

How can franchisors implement and adapt digital organizational communication with collaborative tools and communication theories to empower franchisees, enhance their self-determination, and foster greater autonomy within the franchise system?

1.4 Delimitations

The study's target group was franchisors and franchisees within Boligheter Franchise. Due to the time frame of the study as well as financial aspects in the form of the need to travel if necessary, it has not been possible to visit all franchisees physically except for the main unit. Therefore this thesis includes the units within the franchise system as an analytical case study, and not all global organizational models.

To delve into the concept of motivation as well as engagement and its effects, the study builds upon the theoretical framework Self-Determination Theory explained by Deci and Ryan (2000) and Fogg’s behavior model (2009).

1.5 Thesis structure

This thesis consists of 7 chapters that explore how franchisors can implement and adapt digital organizational communication with collaborative tools and communication theories to empower their franchisees, enhance their self-determination, and foster greater autonomy within the franchise system. Chapter 2 provides a review of the thesis theory frame and key concepts that underpin this study, helping to answer the RQ. Chapter 3 describes the chosen methodologies, including conducted data analysis and validation, as well as the ethics considerations for the study. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the methods applied to answer this study’s RQ, organized into 3 subcategories that covers each main area of the RQ. Chapter 5 includes 2 subcategories: a discussion of the results and a discussion of the chosen methods used in the thesis. Finally, Chapter 6 provides conclusions and suggestions for future work, summarizing the study and offering recommendations for further improvement and research.

2 Theory frame

This chapter outlines the 2 theoretical frameworks that will underpin the study and introduces the key concepts that will be utilized to address the RQ. At first the theoretical frameworks for the study are presented to start unfolding the bigger concepts about Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Fogg’s Behavior model (FBM), and then the key concepts to unfold the answer of this study's RQ. The
included key concept of this study is; Employee engagement and motivation, Communication Theories and Digital Collaboration Tools.

2.1 Literature review

This chapter will provide a more detailed explanation of SDT and FBM, along with an overview of the key concepts that are central to this study. By exploring these theoretical frameworks and key concepts, a deeper understanding of how they relate to the RQ at the heart of this study is provided.

2.1.1 Self-Determination Theory

Tobon et al. (2020) claims that the theoretical framework Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is the framework that best describes how motivation and engagement works. The founders of SDT, Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan (2000), differentiate between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. The purpose of implementing SDT in design is to strive for increased motivation and engagement. SDT according to Tyack and Mekler (2020) is an important psychological theory that deals with human extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. In relation to this, Deci and Ryan (2000) argue that SDT proposes that the human being as a growth-oriented organism is a part of the adaptive design for the human organism to exercise its capacity and seek a sense of belonging in social groups and integrate its experiences individually and as a group in a relative unit.

According to Vallerand (2000), intrinsic motivation comes from within and can be described as; when an individual feels joy and an interest in performing a task, such as painting a picture, as it may be a self-interest the individual has and therefore becomes engaged.

Extrinsic motivation is characterized by the presence of external factors that drive an individual to perform a particular task, rather than the task being self-selected. This type of motivation is distinct from intrinsic motivation, which refers to the internal drive and enjoyment that an individual derives from performing a task. According to Vallerand (2000), extrinsic motivation involves being motivated by external rewards or factors. For instance, an example of external motivation could be someone going to work to earn money in order to pay rent. In this case, the individual is not inherently interested in the job they are performing, but rather motivated by the external need to earn money to fulfill a basic necessity like paying rent. Below in Figure 1, the founder's explanation of SDT will be presented.
Figure 1. Founders explanation of the SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Author’s adaptation.

Within SDT, there are 3 psychological needs according to the authors which are considered to be most important for achieving intrinsic motivation; autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). By satisfying these 3 needs, the motivation of an individual and SD can be increased. When the satisfaction of these 3 needs is counteracted, the individual's motivation and SD feel reduced.

Below, Figure 2 presents the authors adaptation of the theory for a better readability.

Figure 2. Authors adaptation of the SDT.

2.1.1.1 Autonomy, competence and relatedness
Autonomy within SDT according to Ryan (2006) is about the feeling of purpose or willingness when carrying out a task. E.g., if you do something out of self-interest or for personal value, you will experience high autonomy. Autonomy has also been
shown to increase if you are allowed to be self-determining, rewards in the form of informative feedback (in this case, e.g. a DOC) and instructions that are not controlling over the user (Ryan, 2006). Competence, as defined by Ryan and Deci (2017), encompasses our fundamental need to experience a sense of efficacy and mastery. It entails the inherent desire to navigate our significant life domains with confidence and effectiveness. Additionally, according to Ryan and Deci (2017), relatedness can be described as the experience of feeling connected to others, often manifested through a sense of being cared for and belonging. It encompasses the profound need to feel significant and valued within social interactions and relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

2.1.2 Fogg's behavior model

To gain a deeper understanding of the study's intended investigation, Fogg's behavior model (FBM) was utilized. According to Mota et al. (2020) FBM together with SDT are two models that complement each other that allows the analysis of individuals’ motivation (Mota et al., 2020). The purpose of applying this model is to comprehend human behavior, where the model's main characteristics are motivation, ability, and triggers. FBM, which is a relatively new model for understanding human behavior, according to Fogg (2009), posits that an individual's goal-oriented behavior is determined by their level of motivation, ability to perform the behavior, and the trigger to perform it (Fogg, 2009). Down below in Figure 3 there will be a presentation of how Fogg’s behavior model acts.
Figure 3. Explanation of the Fogg’s behavior model (Fogg, 2009). Author’s adaptation.

2.1.2.1 Motivation, triggers and ability

In Figure 1, there are two axes: the vertical axis represents motivation and the horizontal axis represents ability. According to Fogg (2009), when an individual experiences low motivation, it will be reflected as a low value on the vertical axis. Conversely, high motivation will be represented by a high value on the vertical axis. The absence of units on the figure is intentional because it is a conceptual framework that illustrates the relationships between components rather than specific values (Fogg, 2009).

Similarly, the horizontal axis represents ability. Low ability is represented on the left side of the axis, while high ability is represented on the right side. The green star in the upper right-hand corner represents the target behavior, and symbolizes the idea that high motivation and high ability are typically necessary for the target behavior to occur. The diagonal arrow that extends across the figure from the bottom left corner to the upper right emphasizes the relationship between motivation, ability, and the target behavior. Fogg (2009) suggests that without an appropriate trigger, the target behavior will not occur, even if an individual has high motivation and ability. Triggers can take various forms, such as an alarm that sounds or an announcement that a sale is ending, while ability refers to persuasive design experiences that need
to be easy to conduct and the power of simplicity within digital artifacts (Fogg, 2009).

2.2 Employee engagement and motivation

Employee engagement is a term that has gained global popularity in recent years, with many different options and definitions. According to Saks (2005), this may be because employee engagement has been recognized as a crucial element in determining organizational effectiveness, innovation, and competitiveness. Bedarkar & Pandita (2013) note that the term employee engagement has its roots in academic research, but it was considered a major problem for consultants in practical work until the 1990s.

To provide clarity for the intended study, Shami et al. (2015) define employee engagement as the extent to which employees are motivated to contribute to organizational success and are willing to apply discretionary effort to accomplish tasks important for achieving organizational goals. This definition captures the essence of employee engagement, which is critical for organizational success.

Camilla et al. (2017) have further tested FB) regarding motivation. In an exploratory study, they conducted activities with users of a supermarket in Colombia with the intention of identifying how motivation can be affected through design and the inclusion of behavioural and economic theories. The main discussion that emerged related to how motivation is linked to people’s reflected capacity as well as their emotional states. The strategies they used were based on motivation through pleasure/pain, hope/fear, and social acceptance/rejection as proposed by Fogg’s model (2009). Pleasure and pain are considered core motivators in FBM, and their effects are nearly immediate. Individuals respond to what is happening in the present moment. Designers who aim to enhance motivation should consider how pleasure and pain can be embodied in their designs. Hope and fear are also significant motivators. Hope refers to the anticipation of something good happening, while fear is the anticipation of something bad happening. E.g., individuals may be motivated by hope when they join a dating website because they anticipate finding their perfect match, and they may be motivated by fear when updating their settings in virus software. Finally, social acceptance and rejection are also important motivators. Humans are highly motivated to do things that gain social acceptance, and they may be even more motivated to avoid social rejection. Designers who aim to increase motivation should consider how social acceptance or rejection can be incorporated into their designs. Overall, Fogg's Behavior Model provides valuable insights into understanding and designing for motivation (Fogg, 2009).
2.3 Communication theories

When analyzing communication there are two perspectives to be aware of according to Hartley et al. (2023) the first one is to define the process of the communication and the sequential events taking place. The second perspective is to interpret the meaning of the communication; investigate the social and cultural contexts, historical background and to see how the involved participants interpret it all. These two perspectives described are simplified versions of communication theory meaning, there is more thorough work on the subject. The communication theories that will be presented consist of a set of simplified principles. These can be applied to analyze and improve the effectiveness of communication in the contexts; social, cultural and technological and historical as well as, organizational, personal or/-and professional communication (Hartley et al., 2023).

You can improve (but not guarantee) your chances of “success” in communication if you have clear purpose(s) and select appropriate strategies

Further Hartley et al. (2023) mentions that achieving improved communication within an organization or business, or for one's professional career can be done. This is done by figuring out the goals and purposes and thereafter figuring out what strategy that can be used to achieve these goals and purposes. The two pitfalls that exist is that the wrong strategy is used for communication. And if the objectives for the communication are bleary and/or inconsistent. The mindset is to understand that recipients are always trying to understand what is being communicated with the information that is provided by them. For that reason it is critical for the communicator to understand what they are trying to get across to their audiences, simply put that if we do not understand what we are trying to convey to the audiences, they will not either (Hartley et al., 2023).

Communication always mean more than the message

Communication that is taking place always has a context and you should always consider how it is interpreted within that context. The ambiguity in digital communication varies depending on which medium one chooses to communicate with. With some digital communication it is harder to interpret the meaning and behaviors that are being communicated through the messages. Compared to when we are in a real life situation, where people are communicating face to face, where facial expressions, voice tone and body language can be read. For that reason it is important to formulate messages that are clear and in plain language when using digital communication that does not give room for interpretation (Hartley et al., 2023).
Communication is always based in a specific social, cultural, and technological context

According to Hartley et al. (2023) all communication comes with a social, historical and technological context in which it is communicated as well as constraints that need to be taken into account. And every technique and guidelines that does not involve the effects of contexts should be criticized. “For example, many management texts endorse the values of assertiveness without referring to the research which shows that assertive behavior may be seen as aggressive or inappropriate in certain cultural settings or by certain individuals” (Hartley et al., 2023). The social and cultural contexts put a profound impact on the way we interpret meaning in communication. Our background and language and experience and understand communication in the digital sphere and in traditional communication. When we communicate with people that have experienced similar upbringing, culture or social backgrounds it is easier to interpret their social codes such as words, expressions and body language (Hartley et al., 2022).

Hartley et al. (2023) explains that this principle needs special consideration in times when the management of an organization wants to introduce new or change processes or procedures. And that they should be cautious or sensitive with the installments of processes and procedures that are already in place.

Communication and action must be aligned

Hartley et al. (2023) states that when communicating with someone face to face verbally or nonverbally, the communication must have the same meaning. When speaking verbally and the language is not synchronized in a natural way, it will be hard for the receiver of the communication to understand what is trying to be conveyed. E.g. if you are complimenting someone and express an angry face or aggressive body language, it is hard for the person trying to interpret the communication since the channels contradict each other. And further explains that this will be noticed by the audience and may cause confusion for them. The same goes for nonverbal communication where one can receive a message, and the emoji is inappropriate with the language or maybe the receiver perceives the use of the emoji differently compared to the message being conveyed. And this means that we need to act and behave with our words and body language for the communication to be clear and understandable.

Communication can always be improved

Anyone can improve their communication according to Hartley et al (2023) if they review their communication and try to improve it with a set of activities; reviewing the impact of your communication on others, requesting feedback on your communication from others, design a plan or use strategies to improve the communication, develop one's own digital literacy and learn about when to use the
appropriate tool for certain situations or audiences, developing through doing self-reviews of your communication, trying new methods and techniques to see if they work or not.

**Communication is a fundamental management responsibility which everyone shares**

The responsibility for managing communication lies with the management of a business or organization. There is five steps that the management in an organization can take to assure responsibility for how the communication is handled within the organization states David (1995):

1. Introducing the networks and channels to the employees and making sure they start utilizing them from the start.
2. Providing systematic training and education in communication and digital literacy, to be able to use the communication channels effectively and to understand the communication protocols.
3. Developing the organization's communication channels and networks and making sure that they are user friendly and accessible for the employees and that the channels and networks get properly introduced to everyone in the organization.
4. Monitoring the communication processes is also necessary, as it helps to identify areas where communication can be improved. When the communication is monitored it is possible to find problems and weaknesses that can be improved or solved.
5. Costing communication to measure how well the communication is performing. This supports the management in understanding the value of their communication and the return on investment of it.

There are some common pitfalls with this strategy as with any. One of the pitfalls is to leave the communication to one manager, instead it is better to share this responsibility across managers since the communication of an organization is not one person's responsibility (David, 1995).

**New media can and should enhance communication**

In today's digital world the access to communication media is greater than ever. If they are used correctly they can have a profound impact on supporting the way we communicate, if they are integrated carefully into a business or organization and maintained (Hartley et al., 2023). There are various types of collaboration tools that can be used for different purposes such as social media applications or remote and networks and real time conferencing applications such as Zoom or Slack, and it is important to see where and when which tool fits best, since it can support different contexts and purposes within an organization (Hartley et al., 2023).
Digital literacy

According to Hartley et al. (2023) digital communication is now becoming a standard within organizations and businesses. Professional development of digital literacy is essential for the workers to have the skills needed to make the most of digital communication. When it comes to developing digital literacy within businesses, Harrin (2016) and Hartley et al. (2023) claims that the management should educate more about; Self-directed awareness and learning new digital tools or technologies, and should emphasize on what the technology is capable of and the potential of new technology, investigative skills in finding, analyzing and managing information, use of effective practices for digital communication for collaboration, participation, sharing, facilitating and supporting. Also, ability to learn and teach each other and the organization to use the appropriate tools and technologies and lastly effective practices of critical reading (Harrin, 2016; Hartley et al. 2023).

The ability to influence has become a key communication skill in modern organizations

Most of the current practices are dependent on teamwork. To be an effective team worker it is necessary to possess certain communicational skills to be able to influence other members of the team to help them achieve their visions and goals for better communication skills (Hartely et al., 2023).

2.4 How is Franchise taken in this study

There are a lot of different definitions of the concept franchise today, so therefore this study will rely on the definition made by Afonin et al. (2020) which claims that franchise is a system of stable long term contractual relations. Within this particular organization, the main unit is located in Västervik as the franchisor, and the franchisees units are placed in Borås, Skövde, Visby and Kungsbacka. Also, according to which the owner of intellectual capital which is the franchisor, transfers the intellectual property to the franchisee such as other components of its intellectual capital in a franchise agreement. In the requirements of this commercial cooperation, the franchisor transfers the right to use its tangible and mainly intangible assets to the franchisee, which could be equipment, components, materials, graphics (Afonin et al., 2020).

2.5 Digital collaboration tools for organizations

Today there is such a vast range of digital collaboration tools that organizations can rely on to handle their communication. It can be overwhelming to navigate through, and also to find a fitting tool to support the work activities such as communicating within the organization when planning, working on projects, sharing ideas, video conferencing for meetings and exchanging information (Markel & Serbel, 2018).
The digital collaboration tools available today according to Hartley et al. (2023) have much more flexibility and advantages. One of these advantages is to be able to share different types of content across various platforms and applications. When using Whatsapp it is possible to share pictures, videos and hyperlinks to social media networks or-and applications, such as Facebook or Instagram. Further the websites and blogs can be shared to the social media networks or applications and email marketing posts can be shared, you can consider it to be a cluster of sharing and inserting media and information across the mediums (Hartley et al., 2023).

Word processing

When working with online word processing tools and documents, there are three distinctive features that help workers communicate and collaborate. The first feature is the feature to comment, which lets the user add a digital comment to the document. There are also more subfeatures that go beneath the commenting feature, such as; replying or feedback, reactions and resolving. The second feature is revision of the document, which enables users to edit text by deleting, adding or changing text, the changes made are also shown by who made them. The third feature is the highlighting feature, that lets users highlight text in a similar manner as it is done analogy (Markel & Serbel, 2018).

Messaging and chat applications

According to Markel and Serbel (2018) there are two types of messaging tools that have been around for the last decades, these are email and instant messaging (IM), or chat applications that lets people communicate synchronous one-one or in group digitally, to send and receive messages real-time with functionality like sending photos, videos, hyperlinks and inserting other types of media as earlier mentioned by Hartley et al. (2023) and (Markel & Serbel, 2018). IM enables people that are located in different places geographically to communicate textual and visual communication simultaneously or digital material such as spreadsheets, images and video (Markel & Serbel, 2018). Another description of IM that Harrin (2016) provides is that it is a faster way of sending text compared to email, and a better analogy could be that it is more like having a text messaging conversation with someone. One can also usually see a list of colleagues or friends, and the status of them, if they are available or busy e.g., within an organization, group or team (Harrin, 2016).

Email (electronic email) is an asynchronous (meaning it does not happen immediately) medium for sending brief text messages and for transferring files such e.g. text, videos, photos and spreadsheets. When it comes to the use of messaging channels on the phone the most common ones are text messaging (SMS) and microblogging (Markel & Serbel, 2018). The mobile phones make it possible to send and receive text messages synchronously in real-time and it is possible to attach files, send them separately and the formats possible are videos, photos,
spreadsheets, audio, video, images and more. Organizations use text messages to send urgent questions or quick updates or alert people that a task has been completed or that a shipment with an item has arrived for e.g (Markel & Serbel, 2018).

**Video conferencing**

The video conferencing tools available today allow users being one-to-one or in group to communicate with each other simultaneously. It is possible to hear, see and communicate vocally, there are also features such as screen sharing(on computer displays, TV etc). The video conferencing tools have Integration with built in webcam and mic and external webcam and mic for computers that enables users to record and stream their voice and video through the lens of the webcam. Other features include the use of electronic whiteboards etc (Markel & Serbel, 2018).

**Collaboration tools**

The digitalization of the workspace has greatly changed the way people collaborate and interact with each other digitally, which reduces the barriers of space and time. Today it is a standard to communicate and collaborate, not only in teams and in projects , but the whole organization is incorporated somehow and there are different channels, teams and groups divided within the collaboration tool for either specific departments or projects or activities (Markel & Serbel, 2018). Collaboration tools have a lot of advantages for managers and the employees or teams within the organization. The main features that a collaboration tool consists of is; instant messaging (real-time chat); file upload(documents , videos and images); file versioning and collaboration; revising and collaborating on information/documents; create groups, teams or channels;share updates;video conferencing;search and gather information for ideas or projects; report; workflows;notifications and alerts; liking and gamification (Harrin, 2016; Markel & Serbel, 2018).

According to Morgan (2012) there is “full-scale enterprise collaboration platforms”, these platforms that allows businesses and organizations to do literally anything that would be related to handling their communication or using internal tools within the platform such as blogs , word processing and documentation, project management , video conferencing, wikis and much more. Simplified, it can be described as having many collaborative tools separated such as word processing (Google Documents or Word Online) or IM such as Facebook Messenger and Google chat.

Instead the full-scale enterprise platform provides a holistic solution that functions as an internal social network, with all these features included and it is the employees go to use, for work activities and to communicate and plan with the rest of the organization or business. The full-scale enterprise tools also come with features regarding customer participation, support and data collection allowing customers to communicate with one another as well as the employees with the customers. These
full-scale platforms include a package of features for security, organization, project - administrative management and many other functionalities that makes the platform robust, versatile and flexible to serve an organization or business. Some examples of these full-scale enterprise platforms are; Microsoft’s SharePoint; Jive Software; Tibbr; IBM Connections; Moxie Software and Atlassian and there are various platforms to choose from (Morgan, 2012).

Choosing tool for your digital environment

When the communicational tools that have been analyzed that the manager thought could fit the organization and you have found what you are looking for in the tool for communication and collaboration within the organization, then it is time to assess, plan and strategize and further evaluate the costs of implementation contra the economic investment. However conducting a full business case for collaboration tools is difficult for many reasons. Because there are difficulties regarding measuring the intangible results. The time it takes to define exactly what “return implies” means that defining and measuring the return or outcome of a project can be challenging. And lastly lack of time recording measuring the results (Harrin, 2016). The process of implementing a collaboration tool can be divided into five steps e.g. develop a strategy, define system requirements, evaluate and compare different collaboration tools, picking out tool and business case, implementation, assess benefits. When the first two steps are completed namely developing and deciding strategies and evaluating and choosing the tool that fits the requirements. Then it is time to create a business case, where the strategy should be defined, and research what needs to be done to achieve cultural, technological changes and software infrastructure investment, and then prepare a business case to secure the investment (Harrin, 2016).

The first step of implementation is to decide the scope of how the chosen tool should be implemented with the use of a pilot, e.g. if it should be deployed in some parts of the organization or as few as just trying the pilot on a team or two. The pilot should be reviewed and there should be a plan for how it should be further deployed and have strategies for when it does not. If the pilot is found successful the next step is to launch the collaboration tool to a wider audience in the organization. This can be done with two approaches: “the big bang approach” or an “organic approach. In a big bang approach date and time is set for the launch and it’s done to all the teams within the company, accompanied with different ways to promote or educate the organization around the tool. The organic approach is to let a smaller audience use the tool and hopefully it’s found suitable for the organization and the use of it spread from the audience that received the launch. The last step of implementing a collaboration tool is to evaluate the outcomes regarding the strategies and business case but also the objectives goals and purposes it was set out to reach which differ depending on tool and organization (Harrin, 2016).
2.6 Work related to SDT and DOC

Gagné and Deci (2005) demonstrated how Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is relevant to organizational research, particularly with regards to workplace motivation and job attitudes. They argue that autonomous motivation - which encompasses intrinsic motivation and integrated extrinsic motivation - enhances heuristic performance, trust, commitment, satisfaction, and well-being. To facilitate autonomous work motivation, it is suggested that environments should offer interesting and challenging jobs that provide choice and autonomy, as well as promote an autonomy-supportive work climate. Additionally, employees who have a high autonomous causal orientation are more likely to be self-motivated. The authors contend that management theorists recommend enlarging jobs to enhance intrinsic motivation. This can be achieved through horizontal enlargement, which expands jobs to include more activities with task configurations that create a meaningful unit. Alternatively, vertical enlargement can be used to expand jobs to include more planning, decision-making, and problem-solving, which allows people greater autonomy. In both cases, people have greater control over what they do, which can enhance their sense of importance and convey a sense of ownership over their work. Furthermore, job enlargement can enhance both types of autonomous motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

Parker et al. (2010) investigated the relationship between self-determination, employee commitment, and job strain among 123 clerical and administrative workers aged 17-60 in a medium-sized health insurance organization by conducting a questionnaire within the organization. Their findings suggest that self-determination may not protect against job strain-related health problems or anxiety, but it does have a positive impact on perceived employee commitment, which was measured in terms of power, dedication, and absorption. Interestingly, the study also found positive effects of non-self-determination on absorption and power. Self-determined employees may be more likely to perceive or create some degree of autonomy despite their objective work environment. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of self-determination in promoting employee commitment and suggest that it may have some protective effects against the negative effects of job strain (Parker et al., 2010).

Digital organization communication

The study titled "Internal Communication in Contemporary Organizations: Digital Challenge in a Project Management Department" took place in a multinational company's project management department, which focuses on innovation processes in industrialization. Project managers (PJMs) in this department are responsible for coordinating innovation projects from start to mass production. Effective communication is vital for project management and innovation processes, as PJMs spend around 75% of their time interacting and exchanging information. According to Ruão et al. (2022), project management should be seen as a cooperative and interactive system that requires strategic planning and communication support.
The study aimed to contribute to our understanding of internal corporate communication in innovation projects. It focused on analyzing and improving the communication system within the project management department, particularly through digital communication approaches. The methodology used was action research, starting with diagnosing existing communication barriers in industrialization projects. Tailored measures were then implemented to enhance the efficiency of the project management environment. The consequences of these measures were evaluated and discussed to prepare for the next intervention cycle (Ruão et al., 2022).

The conclusion of the study reveals that organizations are facing challenging contexts with increased competition, advancing market demands and growing requirements for products, services and process innovations. To meet these challenges, companies are adopting flexible organizational forms that prioritize projects strategically. Project management plays a profound role in driving innovation by providing a framework of rules, processes, and structures that can be effectively applied within organizations. This framework enables the development of both product and process innovation (Ruão et al., 2022).

Empirical studies, including Ruão et al. (2022), supports the notion that a communication culture that encourages innovation is crucial. Such a culture can be achieved through active participation, interaction, and collaboration in task performance, as well as through motivation and commitment. Innovation is not only a technical concept but also a social one, as it has implications for both society and the organizational environment, and is influenced by them. This intersection with communication sciences highlights the importance of effective internal corporate communication in facilitating innovation. By promoting open and fluid communication within an organization, the diversity and quantity of ideas can be increased, leading to the development of new and valuable solutions. Furthermore Ruão et al. (2022) claims that a project management's internal communication plan for innovation should include different means of communication and to be effective, it must respond to project objectives and the team’s expectations. Besides, it must also consider information overburden effects. As mentioned in the interviews, having to attend too many meetings or receiving loads of emails can overload employees with information, which, in turn, hinders innovative activities. In sum, in order to enhance innovation practices in project management, internal communication should aim to inform, but most also to lead, motivate and acknowledge employees’ participation through the different phases of the process. This seems to increase work satisfaction, performance and productivity. And moving from analog communication to an integrated digital communication solution may be a good path to explore (Ruão et al., 2022).
3 Methodologies for research

This study uses a qualitative approach that combines user-centered design principles with persuasive design techniques. By leveraging these two approaches, the study aims to gain insights into user behavior and preferences and propose effective ideas for guidelines that encourage desired behaviors or outcomes.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the study's methodology, this chapter outlines the foundational methods used in the research. It explains why and how the user-centered design and persuasive design techniques were chosen to answer the RQ, and it covers the selection process that led to the chosen methods. By presenting a clear overview of the study's methodology, this chapter provides readers with a solid foundation for a later understanding of the upcoming chapters results and analysis.

3.1 Selection for the study

Given the qualitative approach adopted for this study and its aim to investigate: how franchisors can implement and adapt digital organizational communication with collaborative tools and communication theories to empower their franchisees, enhance their self-determination and foster a greater autonomy within the franchise system, it was crucial for the researchers to involve participants who could offer valuable and comprehensive insights. Therefore, the selection process for participants in this study focused on franchisees and franchisors associated with Boligheter, as well as them being participants chosen based on their relevant knowledge and willingness to provide information, as suggested by Jacobsen (2017). To gather a diverse range of perspectives, a total of 8 participants were selected for this study, with 3 interviews conducted in person and 5 conducted digitally due to geographical constraints with both franchisees, franchisors and employed store managers.

In order to protect the anonymity of both franchisees and franchisors involved in this study, each respondent will be assigned a title ranging from B1 to B8, with the letter ‘b’ being part of the initial of Boligheter. The assigned title will be based on the order in which their interviews were conducted and the total number of 8 participants. It is worth emphasizing that all the units participating in this study are registered under Boligheter Franchise, a group of units located in Visby, Skövde, Borås, Västervik, and Kungsbacka. Additionally, the participants comprise a diverse mix of individuals identifying themselves as both men and women.

3.2 Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were utilized in this study to investigate the technological, social, and cultural contexts within the particular franchise system
and their influence on communication, to get a more in-depth understanding of the problem. These interviews provided valuable insights into the perspectives of franchise systems and franchisors such as franchisees within, shedding light on their opinions and experiences. By analyzing these insights, the RQ regarding empowering franchisees, enhancing self-determination, and fostering autonomy within the franchise system through the implementation of collaborative tools and communication theories was addressed.

Further the semi-structured interviews also can provide ideas from the participants on the current state of the franchise system, and explore ways to empower their franchisees because it is needed for the authors to gain knowledge about the problem but also in regards to answering the RQ. The authors aimed to gain an understanding of the respondents’ personal experiences and preferences, including their desires for increased autonomy. The interviews were also conducted to identify measures that could empower franchisees and enhance their SD within the franchise system.

To collect the data, each interview was audio-recorded with the prior approval of the respondents. To avoid overwhelming the participants, the authors informed them in advance about the request to record the interview in audio format, which aligns with Goodwin's (2009) recommendation. The audio recordings were then transcribed, resulting in 70 pages of text from the 8 interviews, providing valuable data for analysis. Thematic analysis was conducted in two iterations using a color-coding method based on the study's theoretical framework. The transcription was first color-coded using digital post-it notes in the tool Figma. The coding system was based on the same colors used in the first document, which allowed for easy tracking of the interview from which the answer came. The color-coded transcription helped to identify recurring themes and reflections from the respondents for interpretation and analysis, as well as for presenting the results. This resulted in the identification of different families of themes, which facilitated the interpretation and analysis of the data.

The use of Free Listing in this study allowed the authors to gather ideas from the target group and gain a deeper understanding of their terminologies, behaviors, and beliefs, as noted by Wilson (2013). As the RQ for this study focuses on; How can franchisors implement and adapt digital organizational communication with collaborative tools and communication theories to empower franchisees, enhance their self-determination, and foster greater autonomy within the franchise system, implementing this method complemented the chosen theoretical frameworks and provided concrete ideas while helping the authors understand the target group's behaviors. The use of Free Listing provided valuable insights that will contribute to the development of strategies aimed at achieving the research objectives.
Sample size and target group

This study utilized a sample size of 8 semi-structured interviews conducted with franchisors and franchisees from all 5 units within Boligheter Franchise, who also were the target group for the study. Selecting these 8 respondents is due to the study being based on a qualitative analytical case study (Cash et al., 2022) within a specific franchise company, making their answers crucial to answering the RQ. The selection of respondents was based on information selection, as defined by Jacobsen (2017), which involves selecting individuals who possess a good understanding of the current problem and the organization, and are willing to provide valuable information to the study.

It is important to acknowledge that the sample size is in depth within a specific company based on a qualitative analytical case study, and as such, the findings and conclusions presented in this study may not be generalizable to larger populations. However, the insights gleaned from these respondents provide valuable information and can guide future research in this area.

3.2.1 Semi-structured interviews - M1

The first step in the study was to conduct semi-structured interviews referred to as M1 (method 1). This was because they involve conducting interviews with project stakeholders, which in this case is including all the franchisors such as franchisees within the Boligheter Franchise. When conducting this type of interview you are using a predetermined set of questions (Wilson, 2014). The questions were written with regard to the study's two theoretical frameworks in order to create a deeper understanding of the current problem within the study's RQ but also the opportunity to examine how the situation unfolds within the organization today (see Appendix 2). Unlike structured interviews, semi-structured interviews also allowed the authors for an open-minded approach and the use of follow-up questions when the stakeholders provided valuable information. According to Galletta and Cross (2013), the key to successful semi-structured interviews is to reflect on the exchange between the interviewer and the stakeholder and adjust the questions accordingly. During the interview, there should be enough flexibility to ask follow-up questions and adapt them to obtain as much information as possible from the stakeholder.

3 out of 8 interviews were conducted in person. The remaining interviews were conducted remotely using the digital communication tool Zoom. Each interview lasted between 35 and 45 minutes.

Prior to conducting interviews with stakeholders, an informed consent form was attached (see Appendix 1), giving them the option to approve audio recording and
storage until the end of the project. All participants consented to audio recordings, which were subsequently transcribed and analyzed in two rounds. In the first round, a preliminary analysis was conducted to identify intrinsic and extrinsic motivational aspects from the transcriptions, with the aim of understanding the current situation from the perspectives of SDT and the FBM. In the second round, a more in-depth analysis was performed using the digital tool Figma to create affinity diagrams in the form of digital post-its. Overall, this approach helped to ensure the collection of comprehensive and reliable data while respecting the privacy and preferences of stakeholders.

3.2.2 Free listing - M2

Free listing is according to Wilson (2013) a method in user-centered design which in this context will be referred to as method 2 (M2). Free listing can be used when a question needs to be answered, ideas need to be generated or when terminology, behaviors and beliefs need to be understood. This is done by asking participants to answer questions or generate ideas regarding a certain domain, subject, concept or theme. For this study the free listing method has been conducted to ask the franchisees and franchisors to gather three ideas on how to implement and adapt DOC within a franchise system.

This M2 method was conducted to get a broader picture on how franchisors can implement and adapt DOC to empower franchisees, enhance their SD and foster a greater autonomy within the franchise system. Further Wilson (2013) explains that there is several ways that the free listing methods can be used to gather information such as asking the participants to list all the items or ideas they can think of related to either the domain or subject during a fixed duration of time, this method can be conducted in many different ways either with participants one by one or in larger groups. This M2 method has been conducted on distance due to the geographical distance to all the units, and the participants did 3 5-minute sessions, one session for each idea. By writing text on post-its either in the design collaboration tool Figma or by using post-its analogically and photographing their ideas (see figure 4). The participants were asked to add as many comments and build on their idea as much as possible by adding more post-its during each session.
Figure 4. Explanation of presentation of ideas in the Free Listing.
3.3 Thematic Analysis

The authors first analyzed the data from M1 using Creswell (2009) qualitative data approach, which involves 5 steps of iteration: preparing, reading, coding the content, thematizing, and summarizing the collected data. However, for this study, the approach was adapted to only 2 iterations, with the authors thematizing and summarizing the data after transcription. The details of how each iteration was conducted are presented in section 4.3.2 and 4.3.3. The goal of the analysis is to examine how franchisors can implement and adapt DOC with collaborative tools and communication theories to empower their franchisees, enhance their SDT, and promote greater autonomy within the franchise system. To achieve this, the data was thematized based on the key themes of the study. Prior to conducting the 2 iterations, the authors transcribed all 8 interviews, resulting in approximately 70 pages of text.

3.3.1 Iterations in the analysis of the interviews

Initially, the authors transcribed the 8 interviews which resulted in 70 pages of text. To efficiently identify answers within the selected themes, we color-coded the summarized qualitative data. For this purpose, a set of 7 distinct colors was used, which aided the subsequent thematic analysis in the upcoming 2 iterations. Affinity diagrams in Figma were used to visualize the coded data (see figure 5). Each color represented a cornerstone of the study's frameworks. Specifically, the color green symbolizes intrinsic motivation, while red represents extrinsic motivation. Brown was assigned to represent organizational aspects during this phase.

![Figure 5. Example of the color-coding process.](image)

The remaining four colors - neon-green, yellow, blue, and violet red - were used to indicate specific aspects within the coded data. Blue represented ideas for improvements, neon-green denoted positive responses within the interviews, yellow represented general doubtfulness, and violet red was used to highlight negative opinions. These 4 themes were prioritized only for secondary investigation if needed.
Table 1 below presents all the identified themes within the thematic analysis, including explanations of the primary themes as well as the secondary themes that were identified.

Table 1. Overview of all identified themes from the analysis of the interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified themes</th>
<th>Themes primarily included in the study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic motivation</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational aspects</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvements</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive responses</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General doubtfulness</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative opinions</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.2 Iteration 1

During the first iteration, the author's objective was to organize the colour-coded data into more manageable chunks of information while maintaining traceability to the previously summarized qualitative data from the 8 interviews. The primary categories - intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and organization - were transferred to Figma and sorted using an affinity diagram, represented by digital post-it notes. Each note contains a code that refers back to the corresponding transcription for easy traceability. Subsequently, the authors identified subcategories within these primary categories and grouped thematically. Secondary categories was also included, such as ideas and negative opinions. However, certain categories was excluded, such as positive responses (green) and general doubtfulness (yellow), as they were brief and did not significantly contribute to the overall study.

Figure 6 below provides an example of the subcategories identified within the primary categories. These subcategories include negative aspects, various communication methods used by the organization, gamification as a strategy, communication on your own initiative, and ideas for improvement.
3.3.3 Iteration 2

During the final iteration, the authors identified themes within the overarching categories identified in iteration 1, to create a concise compilation before presenting the results from the data collection and analysis. As suggested by Arvola (2021), in this phase, the authors collected post-it notes that were similar in terms of feelings and general data and named them in different teams to obtain an overall name.

Figure 7 below illustrates the different themes we identified based on the overarching categories identified in iteration 2.
Figure 7. Different teams identified within the overarching categories from iteration 2.

3.4 Analysis of results

This chapter presents an analysis of the data collection conducted within the framework of this study’s two theoretical frameworks SDT and FBM, together with the presented theory within chapter 2. The study’s two theoretical frameworks were chosen to enable the analysis of the study’s data collection in relation to the participants' motivations, abilities, triggers, but also to examine how their intrinsic motivation such as extrinsic motivation acts together with autonomy, competence and relatedness. By applying this, it enables the authors to create an understanding precisely of how franchisors can implement and adapt digital strategies to empower their franchisees, enhance their self-determination and foster greater autonomy within the franchise system.

Additionally, the analysis incorporates the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 to enhance the connection between the gathered responses and the existing body of literature. Within Figure 2 and Figure 3 in chapter 2, explanations of each theoretical framework is provided.

3.4.1 Analysis regarding Self-Determination Theory

According to Edward and Deci's Self-Determination Theory (2000), extrinsic motivation can be observed when an individual engages in work primarily to earn money for necessities such as rent. In such cases, the individual's interest in the job itself is not intrinsic, but rather driven by the external need to meet basic financial obligations.

Within the context of this study, the extrinsic motivation is characterized by the nature and urgency of organizational communication across different channels. For instance, some participants find it necessary to contact their franchisors specifically when encountering technical issues, as the franchisors possess the expertise and ability to provide remote assistance. By assisting franchisees in resolving problems, franchisors not only enable them to continue accepting payments from customers but also fulfill their fundamental need for competence. According to Ryan and Deci (2017), competence refers to an individual's intrinsic need to experience a sense of efficacy and mastery. In the long term, this empowers franchisees to develop problem-solving skills and handle similar issues independently in the future. In terms of organizational dynamics, the M1 findings indicate that franchisors have an overall extrinsic motivation for communication with franchisees. Franchisors recognize the importance of maintaining regular contact with franchisees since they have invested in the franchise concept, and franchisees rely on communication to
ensure compliance with the established guidelines across different units. However, when it comes to extrinsic motivation, franchisees may seek additional support and guidance from franchisors as part of their role and responsibilities within the franchise system. When franchisees request increased support and guidance, franchisors can share their knowledge and provide relevant background information. By doing so, franchisees’ SD is enhanced as they gain more independence in their work. This support fosters a sense of competence and autonomy among franchisees and themselves.

Intrinsic motivation, as described by Edward and Deci (2000), is characterized by an individual's sense of joy and interest in performing a task. E.g. when someone paints a picture out of personal interest, they become fully engaged in the activity. In relation to the M1 findings, there was a unanimous response among participants indicating that they possess intrinsic motivation to seek digital contact because they are confident in receiving helpful and knowledgeable assistance, and also their inherent need for control. This preference for digital communication is driven by the advantages it offers, such as clarity, flexibility, and adaptability based on the urgency and importance of the situation. Additionally, participants in M1 expressed satisfaction with their current communication approach, as it allows them to engage in meaningful conversations in a manner that aligns with their intrinsic motivations, and the feeling of relatedness, which according to Ryan and Deci (2017) is the experience of feeling connected to others manifested through a sense of being cared for and belonging. The times that intrinsic motivation will lack according to data from M1, is when the communication response is left out and causes communication to falter within the franchise when this occurs. When franchisees engage in digital communication driven by their intrinsic motivation, it signifies their active pursuit of self-interest. Consequently, fostering greater autonomy becomes feasible, as Ryan (2006) asserts that autonomy also thrives when individuals are given the opportunity to be self-determined.

In relation to fostering greater autonomy within an organization, the M2 findings suggest several ideas for improvement. One such idea is to organize physical conferences and joint study visits with suppliers. These initiatives can empower franchisees by instilling a sense of relatedness. When individuals feel connected to others and have a sense of belonging, it fulfills their profound need to feel significant and valued within social interactions and relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2007). By implementing these measures, employees will perceive that their work and motivation hold importance for the organization. Consequently, they will experience a greater sense of autonomy as they fulfill a meaningful purpose.
3.4.2 Analysis regarding Fogg’s Behavior Model

In addressing the issue of insufficient communication within the organization, which can potentially lead to a lack of compliance with established guidelines in the franchise system, one proposed approach to stimulate intrinsic motivation for communication is based on the M1 findings. It suggests that franchisors can employ notifications and reminders to prompt franchisees to fulfill their mandatory obligations. By implementing this strategy, franchisors could create triggers (Fogg, 2009) that serve as reminders for franchisees to engage in necessary communication. These notifications can effectively cultivate an intrinsic motivation within franchisees, encouraging them to proactively communicate and fulfill their responsibilities within the franchise system. This approach aims to bridge the communication gap and ensure that units maintain compliance with the established guidelines over the long term, but also being part of how franchisors can implement and adapt DOC. This type of trigger is also a part of the subcategory motivation and pleasure/pain (see section 2.2). By sending these types of triggers to their franchisees, they will respond to it in the present moment because they need to fulfill their tasks, and therefore a suggestion on how to implement and adapt an upcoming DOC.

Based on ability (see section 2.1.2.1), an innovative idea from M2 emerged for the future: the development of a personalized organizational communication app. This app would be specifically tailored to meet the needs of individuals within the organization, with a particular focus on cell phone compatibility. The choice to prioritize cell phone adaptability stems from its efficiency in facilitating quick information updates and enabling easy contact, making it the most streamlined method within an organization, and also a suggestion on how to adapt and implement an upcoming DOC.

3.4.3 Analysis regarding literature

The results of M1 findings revealed that the participants perceive that their current ways of communication works well, and that they feel an openness to use and undertake more technological communication channels to improve it further. But the participants think that there might be too many communication channels/ways to communicate through currently. This finding relates to two of the principles, namely Communication can always be improved and New media can and should enhance communication (see section 2.3).

Hartley et al. (2023) states that; communication can be improved by reviewing the impact that the communication has on others and requesting feedback from
stakeholders involved to distinguish areas of improvement. It is recommended to design a plan to implement the strategies that have been picked out to improve the communication. And to develop the overall digital literacy of the employees of the organization, and to learn about applying the right set of tools for specific situations or contexts. As one participant stated in the M1 findings:

They use phone calls when they have lots of questions, text messages through different digital channels when they want quick responses and a facebook messenger group for quick questions that can be answered by anyone within the organization, and lastly email for larger chunks of information or when there is not as much urgency in getting quick responses. (Interview B4, 2023).

They use text messages through different digital channels, when they want quick responses on questions and get answers from everyone in the organization. Most likely this is one part that could be reviewed, considering another part of the M1 data states that “satisfied with their current approach of communication. Because it allows them to engage in intimate conversations while simultaneously having separate chats or group chats” (Interview B5, 2023) which means that they seem to be satisfied with most parts of their communication but that there seems to be a lack of guidelines on “where what” should be communicated when it comes to their digital communication ,and analysis of the problems regarding the organization's communication.

To look over their digital literacy is beneficial in order to utilize the communication channels correctly and to understand the pros and cons for the different digital tools whether it is word processing, video conferencing or collaboration tools made specifically for working in organizations digitally (see section 2.5) that includes features to support communication within an organization and strategies as well. And to get a broader understanding of why they are using certain tools in some situations so they get a better understanding of themselves and their communication within the organization. So in conclusion there are many ways to implement and enhance, adapt and implement digital communication and there are different aspects that a manager or business owner can look at to improve it. In this case regarding what was mentioned earlier they feel satisfied with the way they handle intimate conversations and certain routines. But that the guidelines, structure, communication channels or/-and tools, can be reviewed and analyzed by using the principles namely Communication can always be improved and New media can and should enhance communication (see section 2.3) and this also helps in answering this study’s RQ. Since it demonstrates how the principles can be applied for analysis to find ways to improve communication and existing problems with the communication, that then can be handled to implement and adapt digital organizational communication with
collaborative tools and communication theories to empower franchises, enhance self determination and foster greater autonomy within the franchise system.

Furthermore this relates to the M2 findings where the idea of implementing an application or developing the current intranet more to fit the users needs and desires of the organization to implement and enhance the communication, and limit the communication channels of the communication. However an organization or franchise needs to conduct a thorough analysis of their communication and the cost of implementing or adapting their digital communication and collaborative tools that they are currently utilizing. It might be so that it is to early to focus on developing a tool or their intranet considering that there already are many tools available to communicate, collaborate, plan and share ideas, conduct video and voice conferencing, exchange documents and information etc that could be reviewed and furthermore implemented if it seems as a strategic choice for the benefit of the enhancement and adaptation with the use of collaborative tools to empower and enhance self determination and foster autonomy within the organization or franchise. The findings also remark that there is a problem with their digital literacy regarding the guidelines that have been set through their handbook that should be taught and referenced to educate communication within the organization. This relates to the principles Communication is a fundamental management responsibility which everyone shares, Digital literacy, The ability to influence has become a key communication skill in modern organizations and Communication can always be improved (see section 2.3).

Regarding digital literacy Hartley et al. (2023) explains that digital literacy is needed for professional development and that it is essential to be well educated to be able to utilize the skills and tools for communication. In other words it is hard to blame the employees for misunderstandings regarding communicating and using digital collaborative tools if the guidelines and strategies for using tools and communicating are not taught to the people that will be using the digital communication. Which brings to the next principle: the ability to influence has become a key communication skill in modern organizations which is hard for an employee to do in an organization when they do not have the skills and knowledge to utilize digital communication. Thereafter, the last principle that will be brought up and discussed relating to this finding communication is a fundamental management responsibility which everyone shares. In this case it is important because there are problems in the findings regarding the handbook not being updated, introduced and utilized by the workforce. There is a problem regarding management when documents regarding digital literacy are not introduced. however this should be a shared responsibility from the whole franchise or organization to learn and improve and analyze on what they can do to assimilate the digital literacy, and also share the responsibility of the management of the organizations
communication. When the workforce does not possess the skills and knowledge and are properly introduced into the digital communication of an organization it is hard to utilize collaboration/collaborative tools that are mentioned in (see section 2.5).

3.5 Validation

According to Thurén (2019), validity refers to the degree to which a study measures what it set out to measure. In this study, the authors carefully planned the interview questions with help from the presented theories, ensuring that they would investigate the intended subject area. The validity for answering the study's RQ is judged to be at a good level as the authors' research has provided insights into the problem.

It is important to note that the study's validity is strong in terms of drawing conclusions within the specific organization under investigation because the selection includes all the stores within the franchise concept. However, due to the fact that it is a qualitative analytical case study, the results should be regarded as more of a set of possible guidelines for franchisors, and therefore caution should be exercised when attempting to generalize the results to larger populations. These findings offer insights into how they can effectively implement and adapt DOC to empower franchisees, enhance SD, and foster greater autonomy within the franchise system.

3.6 Ethics

This study does not have problems with this. Now, Prior to each of the two data collection phases, all participants were informed about the requirements for individual protection as specified by Vetenskapsrådet (2002) for their participation in scientific research. These requirements ensure that participants are not subjected to physical or psychological harm, humiliation, or any form of violation during their involvement in research activities. To meet the requirements of individual protection, studies must fulfill four key criteria: the information requirement, the consent requirement, the confidentiality requirement, and the use requirement. Adherence to these criteria ensures that studies prioritize individual protection and comply with ethical and legal guidelines (Vetenskapsrådet, 2002). Prior to conducting the 8 semi-structured interviews, an informed consent form was prepared and sent to all participants via email (see Appendix 1). The informed consent form provided detailed information about the study's purpose, assuring participants that their interview responses would remain anonymous and confidential. Participants were informed that it would not be possible to identify who said what. Furthermore, they were given the freedom to withdraw from the
interview at any time, with the assurance that their personal data would be treated confidentially.

Participants were also given the option to consent to audio-recording of their interviews, which would later be transcribed for analysis purposes. All participants agreed to this recording. For the 3 participants who were unable to complete the written consent process prior to their interviews, verbal consent was obtained instead. During this verbal consent process, they were provided with information about the study's purpose and reassured about the confidentiality of their identities, in accordance with individual protection requirements. Since the second phase of the study was conducted digitally and not simultaneously, participants who agreed to participate in the Free Listing-method, were informed that their written content would be visible to other participants, but personal names would not be disclosed. Therefore, recording of the digital content was unnecessary.

As this is a case study conducted within a live franchise setting, maintaining ethical standards of anonymity within the company was given utmost importance. The responses provided by each participant have been kept confidential and have not been shared with any other franchisee or the franchisor.
4 Results of the M1 and M2 findings

This chapter presents the results of the data collection from M1 and M2, which provides the possibility to answer the RQ of this study. It is divided into 3 subsections that correspond to the study's 3 main areas: implementation, enhancing, and foster. Each subsection provides detailed information related to its respective area to unfold the answer of: how franchisors can implement and adapt digital organizational communication strategies to empower franchisees, enhance their self-determination, and foster greater autonomy within the franchise system.

Table 2. Main findings related to RQ and the methods performed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ category</th>
<th>M1</th>
<th>M2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Implementing and adapting in DOC | ● Multiple channels for communication | ● Application
● Lack of communication
● Problems regarding their digital literacy | ● Further development of current intranet |
| Enhancing SD                 | ● Desire for competitive elements
● Franchisors need to include their franchisees more
● Internal platform for the organization | ● Sales/styling educations
● Physical conferences
● Inspirational on-site training
● Frequent visits in the units |
| Fostering autonomy           | ● Inherent need for control
● Continuous contact to stay aligned
● More frequent meetings within the organization | ● Joint studies with suppliers
● Practice at main store in Västervik |
4.1 To implement and adapt the DOC in a Franchise

The results from M1 reveal that there are many suggestions on how to implement and adapt the digital organizational communication into the franchise. Further the results from M1 shows that there was a variety in the responses in how they are communicating, but also how they experience the communication together with further suggestions on how to implement and adapt the DOC in a franchise context.

4.1.1 Current situation of the DOC

The results from M1 have identified that there are multiple ways/channels of communication that the franchise uses depending on the urgency and nature of the communication. For instance they use phone calls for addressing extensive inquiries, text messages across different digital platforms for prompt responses and a facebook messenger group for quick questions that can be answered by any member within the organization, and lastly email for conveying substantial amounts of information or when immediate responses are not of utmost urgency. In one of the interviews the participants express the desire to have more digital contact, “I have a motivation to approach for a digital contact because I am well aware that I will get a good help, and endowed with a good knowledge” (Interview B1, 2023).

The results from the M2 method reveal one idea about developing an application. The participants would want this application to be adapted to the organization, and hopefully it could limit the other ways of communicating digitally since the current situation contains an overflow of communications channels.

4.1.2 Opinions about the communication today

When it comes to their approach of communicating M1 reveals the participants think that it can be effective, since the communication is being adapted depending on the context of urgency and importance when the franchise wants to communicate. It makes the communication more clear, flexible and understandable. However the results from M1 also reveal that there might be one to many ways to communicate. Lastly the data received by the participants from M1 state that they are satisfied with their current approach of communication. Because it allows them to engage in intimate conversations while simultaneously maintaining separate individual chats or groupchats spontaneously with other employees of the franchise, e.g. the franchisor or other franchisees.

4.1.3 Considerations when implementing and adapting DOC

The M1 study also brings up negative aspects that can be taken into consideration when implementing and adapting DOC. And according to the data from M1,
intrinsic motivation will lack when the communication responses are left out and causes the communication to falter within the franchise. Thereafter the data from M1 remarks that there is a problem with their documentation on digital literacy. The handbook that the participants mention in M1, that the organization provides, is not being used within the franchise and the franchisors are not advocating it enough to motivate franchisees to utilize it. Further there is an expressed need for this handbook to be developed and introduced properly. Another negative aspect brought up from M1. And that is when the mail response is left out from the receiver, it is easy for misunderstandings and miscommunication to arise since there is no way to verify that emails have been read by the receiver.

4.1.4 Communication practices
The data from M1 provides information on which communication channels that are present within the organization today and how they are being used. According to the data from M1, the communication paths present today is; WhatsApp, phone calls, mail, text messages, Facebook groups within Facebook messenger and monthly newsletters. In relation to these multiple different channels for communication, it emerged that franchisees enjoyed having intimate contact and being able to converse one-on-one with the franchisors when needed.

4.1.5 Suggestions to implement and adapt DOC
The M1 study suggests further improvements to implement and adapt DOC. The first suggestion from M1, is to remind the franchisees digitally on errands they need to carry out as a franchisee within the organization. And to give them more constructive feedback on a regular basis to feel validated over their work. Further the M1 participants give examples on how the reminders or notifications could be formulated or designed, e.g. “Don’t forget to style the seasonal table” or “I have requested a picture of your storefront?”. The last proposal is that there should be more education and systematic training regarding sales arguments, pointers and inspiration that could increase the sales for the boutiques within the franchise. From one of the interviews the participant says “A routine of monthly follow-up or whatever it may be with more support in everyday life around feelings, experiences, etc ” (Interview B1, 2023).
Thereafter the M1 data proposes improvements regarding reporting to the franchisors on a month to month basis, and that these reports should be reviewed in the same frequency.

The findings from the M2 method provided one idea. Their current intranet could be further developed and therefore a suggestion on how to implement and adapt DOC.
4.2 To enhance Self-Determination in a Franchise

4.2.1 The current enhancement of SD within the organization

In the M1 findings there were explanations and tributes regarding the current enhancement of SD within the organization today. By having the explanations earlier of the opinions that there is a relaxed conversation today (see section 5.3) the franchisees also explains that they are getting a positive and constructive feedback if there is something wrong with e.g. their styling or exposure of products, which results in an SD of still wanting to stick to the franchise system and being motivated myself by this to constantly improve.

4.2.2 Interest in specific motivational strategies

Based on the M1 findings, participants expressed a common desire for a motivational aspect from the franchisors that they could choose to participate in, without it being too serious. Some participants also expressed a desire for a competitive element because some of them can not work without having the option to compete with another individual, which could take the form of a digital competition to overcome geographical barriers. They also suggested creating a platform for franchisees to exchange sales tips and share successful customer phrases, which not only motivates them but also allows them to take pride in their accomplishments. If sales competitions were implemented, participants emphasized the importance of tailoring the approach to suit each store's unique requirements, such as using a percentage-based reward system and distributing proportional rewards based on sales generated throughout the day.

4.2.3 Opposition to motivational strategies

All participants in the M1 findings did not agree with the strategy of using competitions as a motivational aspect (3 out of 8). Some participants stated the fact that the franchise systems is still small with the 5 units, and therefore the competition strategy would be hard to conduct when the flow of customers is different within the 5 different cities that the Boli gheter units reside in which aligns with “If I had a better work flow of customers, I would feel more motivated not only with the sales but with other parts of the work as well. But I feel that it is hard to apply to an organization of this size” (Interview B4, 2023).

4.2.4 Suggestions to enhance SD within the franchise system

The M1 study suggested several ways to enhance SD within the franchise context. One recommendation was for franchisees to ask for more support and guidance from franchisors on managing their units. Additionally, franchisors could share the knowledge they gain from seeking inspiration and provide background information on different products for franchisees to read on their own. Franchisees could also
receive more styling advice from franchisors, such as guidance on material choices and their benefits, along with incentives to enhance their self-determination. Regular meetings with the organization could empower store owners to discuss their situations, feelings, and seek advice at least once a month, with spontaneous check-ins as needed.

External information from the franchisors shared with franchisees to enhance SD could include research articles on sales or buying behavior related to retail, suggestions for education on payment solutions, leadership, and documentaries with lectures that align with the Boligheter's vision. Implementing these suggestions could enhance self-determination throughout the organization, as franchisees gain more knowledge and share the same vision as the franchisors. This would not only benefit franchisees, but also boost the confidence of franchisors, knowing that franchisees are aligned with the company's vision. Maintaining a common thread across all units would ultimately strengthen the franchise concept as a whole.

The M2 findings suggest that physical conferences would be beneficial to allow franchisees to meet in person and exchange knowledge and experiences. Additionally, the franchisors could provide inspirational on-site training to help franchisees better understand concepts. Furthermore, the findings propose that more education regarding sales, styling, and materials could be provided to enhance franchisees' self-determination, allowing them to style and expose their products on their own, in line with the organizations vision. If the organization is in need of a voluntary motivation boost there is a suggestion also to implement sales competitions optimized for each store to allow each franchisor and franchisee to choose if they want to participate or not. By implementing these suggestions, the franchise concept can be further strengthened and the franchisees can improve their abilities to manage their units.

4.3 To foster greater autonomy in a Franchise context

4.3.1 Current autonomy

According to the results of M1, there are several ways to encourage autonomy in a franchise concept. Currently, franchisees feel empowered to communicate their feelings with main units and colleagues through digital channels. This has led to a positive attitude towards initiating communication, which not only boosts motivation but also creates a relaxed atmosphere within the organization. Franchisors are also motivated when franchisees actively engage with them and seek clarification through questions, and therefore experience a feeling of purpose as well as willingness, when carrying out tasks. This helps to improve franchisees' understanding of the overall concept and reinforces a unified approach among all parties involved.
4.3.2 What each individual do to foster autonomy currently

M1 study found that individuals promote their own autonomy in different ways. Some individuals have an inherent need for control and therefore actively reach out to maintain a sense of autonomy. Additionally, individuals may establish regular contact intervals, such as weekly or every third week, to seek further assistance within the organization and keep their autonomy levels high. Most things also need to be runned or passed by the franchisor for “clearance” and that they discuss with them about almost anything they do. Further the participants argue about the importance of having continuous contact with the franchisors in order to stay aligned with the franchise concept, and so the store runs in a similar manner as the head office or store. They also often contact the franchisors for help in order to work towards their visions, goals or provide ideas, and that there is a desire for the franchisees to reach the goals and visions within the organization.

4.3.3 Reducing of the autonomy

The M1 study also identified some negative aspects of the franchisees' experience of autonomy. A major concern is the lack of overall communication within the organization, including insufficient feedback and support. This can hinder workers' autonomy and make some feel isolated in their duties. Conversely, some franchisees experience excessive autonomy and confidence in handling situations independently, leading them to deviate from established regulations. This highlights the importance of balancing autonomy with adherence to regulations.

4.3.4 Suggestions on how to foster a greater autonomy

To foster an even greater autonomy within the franchise concept, the franchisees wish for even more regular contact with the franchisors, this for the control and to validate that their working is going in the right direction according to their regulations within the franchise, but also via check-ins to feel that they fill a purpose within the franchise concept. By also having a mandatory contact with the franchisors regarding upcoming campaigns, fronting and how styling should be done they also experience a purpose and willingness to carry out tasks because they want to fulfill the regulations within the franchise concept.

The findings of the M2 study indicate that conducting joint studies with suppliers can give franchisees a stronger sense of purpose and increase their willingness to carry out tasks within the regulations of the franchise concept. Joint studies with suppliers can also inspire franchisees to bring new ideas back to their units and develop a deeper understanding of why the franchisor and the overall franchise concept are successful and unfold a deeper feeling within each individual filling a purpose and willingness to strive after a great adaption of the franchise concept within each individual store. Another idea was also to have more frequent visits
between the franchisees, and between the franchisees and franchisor. The visits can give the franchisees and franchisor insights on how a franchise system is designed within the different units and provides the possibility to share and discuss, and new ways of handling the franchise may arise. Further suggestions found in M2 was to provide the franchisees with an opportunity to "practice" and work with the franchisors at the main store to gain a better understanding of how the daily operations work. This would include observing how they motivate each other, interact with customers, and contribute to the city, ultimately giving the franchisees a greater sense of purpose and motivation to apply these practices in their own units.
5 Discussion

This chapter begins with the presentation of the results discussion and the conclusions that the authors draw in relation to the study’s RQ regarding: how can franchisors implement and adapt digital organizational communication with collaborative tools and communication theories to empower franchisees, enhance their self-determination, and foster greater autonomy within the franchise system. Following the results discussion, a method discussion is presented to evaluate the contributions made by the study and identify any potential areas for improvement.

5.1 Discussion of results

Franchise systems must be cautious when enhancing SD among their franchisees, as there can be both advantages and disadvantages to doing so. As analyzed (see section 3.5.1), when franchisors provide their franchisees with the necessary support and guidance, they can foster improved self-determination over time. However, it is important to note that franchisees can also feel empowered when given the tools and information they need to operate their units independently, and when they have easy access to franchisor support in times of need. Assisting franchisees in resolving problems can increase their SD, as it equips them with the knowledge and skills to handle similar issues in the future. This, in turn, can foster a sense of competence and independence. Just as Gagné and Deci (2005) argue (see section 2.6), this facilitates autonomous work motivation and that environments should offer interesting and challenging jobs that provide choice and autonomy. However, an unintended consequence of enhanced SD may be franchisees choosing to deviate from established guidelines the franchisor has given them the right to use (Afonin et al., 2020), such as by styling their store in a unique way or purchasing goods that do not align with the franchise concept. Such actions can jeopardize the franchise's brand and reputation. Therefore, franchisors must strike a balance between empowering their franchisees and ensuring they adhere to the franchise's established guidelines and values. By providing clear guidance and support, while also encouraging creativity and innovation within the franchise system, franchisors can create a culture that enhances both SD and a strong sense of community and shared purpose and therefore also foster a greater autonomy within an organization.

Enhancing franchisees SD creates an opportunity to also foster greater autonomy. Over time, as inclusiveness and open communication are prioritized, individuals begin to realize that their actions have a purpose, which increases their willingness to perform their tasks as franchisees. Additionally in relation to the M2 findings, organizing more physical conferences or allowing units to participate in visits to suppliers can foster a greater sense of intrinsic motivation and autonomy. This is particularly relevant for organizations with geographically dispersed units in Sweden or other countries. As the franchisees become more engaged and involved in the broader organizational context, their motivation levels increase, leading to
better performance and improved outcomes such as performing high on FBM motivation-scale (see fig. 3).

The data collected revealed within intrinsic motivation that most members of the organization were highly motivated to contact the franchisor because they knew they would receive valuable assistance and information. However, it also highlighted a gap in communication, as franchisees did not proactively reach out to the franchisor beyond seeking help when needed. This lack of proactive communication was a concern for franchisors, as they hoped franchisees would be more externally motivated to engage with the organization. Recognizing the decline in intrinsic motivation and the breakdown of communication, it became evident that a concerted effort was necessary to cultivate a sense of community and collaboration within the organization. In this regard, the concept of relatedness, as proposed by Ryan and Deci (2017) (see section 2.1.1.1), becomes crucial. By fostering a strong sense of relatedness within the organization through mutual support and open communication, the franchise system can promote greater autonomy among franchisees. This is because when franchisees feel a sense of purpose and a willingness to work towards the established guidelines, their autonomy is enhanced. Furthermore, by providing clear explanations and relevant information, franchisors can further SD within the system over the long term.

By encouraging franchisees to engage with each other and the franchisor, not just when assistance was needed, but also in sharing best practices and helping each other overcome challenges, intrinsic motivation could be reinvigorated. By implementing a collaboration tool, it would be preferable to manage and structure the digital communication of a franchise or organization. This because collaboration tools consist of so many features that have been made and adapted, enhanced to support in implementing DOC, such as; instant messaging (real-time chat); file upload (documents, videos and images); file versioning and collaboration; revising and collaborating on information/documents; create groups, teams or channels; share updates; video conferencing; search and gather information for ideas or projects; report; workflows; notifications and alerts (Harrin, 2016; Markel & Serbel, 2018).

Implementing a tool that is already developed and analyzed for communication could serve as a better option in contrast to developing their intranet or developing an application from scratch since there are no assurances that this will “solve” or improve the communication. As Harley et al. (2023) mentions there is no guarantee for success even if the right strategy or tool is chosen for an organization’s communication, we can only improve the chances of being successful with enhancing, adapting and implementing DOC into a franchise or an organization. This should be thoroughly analyzed taking factors in consideration such as contexts, management, cost communication, strategies to implement the tool and if the collaborative tool will be able to help the franchise or organization to reach their
goals, visions and purposes. Such efforts would help create a stronger sense of
shared purpose and community, which in turn would benefit both individual
franchisees and an organization as a whole.

The data collected based on the FBM revealed results related to Fogg’s definitions
of motivation, as well as the framework’s additional aspects: triggers and abilities.
Implementing triggers in the form of notices and reminders was found to be a
beneficial strategy for enhancing communication within the organization. However,
it is important to emphasize the need for optimizing these reminders and notices.
Fogg (2009) suggests that relying solely on pleasure/pain motivation, which may
induce guilt if tasks are not completed immediately, might not be the most ethical
approach when designing digital interfaces. Users should not feel guilty if they are
unable to complete a task despite receiving a reminder. Instead, a suggestion for the
franchisor within the organization is to utilize these types of reminders throughout
the entire organization. This approach ensures that everyone involved is aware of
the upcoming tasks and establishes a structure for mandatory obligations for all
franchisees. By implementing this system, the organization can communicate that
reminders are not intended on a personal level. Consequently, individuals can
perceive their actions as purposeful, fostering greater autonomy within the franchise
system.

Further analysis of the results revealed that there were many findings that could be
interpreted and examined, for analysis with the principles for analyzing
communication. And it shows that analyzing the communication with
communication principles presented in (section 2.3) can serve as a good starting
point for franchises or organizations to analyze the overall communication of the
organization and the individuals personal and professional communication. Which
also further supports in improving and enhancing the overall communication of an
organization and understanding and interpreting how it relates to the technological,
cultural and social contexts within the organization (Hartley et al., 2023). It is
important to note as Hartley et al. (2023) underlines that you can improve
communication, but that there is no “guarantee” of success whether you choose the
right strategy or not, however choosing the right strategy will support the endeavor
to improve your chances of success in implementing, enhancing and adapting DOC
into the organization.

In the analysis of the M1 data it was found that the franchise perceives that their
current way of communicating works well and that they feel positively about
incorporating more digital communication into their work life. But the participants
think that there might be too many communication channels/ways to communicate
through currently. This finding was clearly related to the principles Communication
can always be improved and New media can and should enhance communication
(see section 2.3). The analysis related to these two principles revealed that; the DOC
can be adapted, enhanced and improved by utilizing the practices Hartley et al (2023) explains by figuring out the organizations or franchises and employees goals, visions and purposes and to figure out and utilize the strategy that is most effective in achieving these goals, visions and purposes both on an organizational and personal level. Another observation that was related to this M1 data is that franchises and organizations can request feedback from colleagues, between departments or other stakeholders depending on the context or depending on the strategy for improving communication. What was found in the analysis is that there are various ways to improve communication. It all depends on the goals, purposes and visions of the organization or franchise. And what collaborative tools, communication theories, strategies and approaches that could be utilized in order to achieve the goals, visions and purposes, in order to improve the overall communication and enhance, adapt and implement DOC. In this finding from M1 the participant also stated “But the participants think that there might be too many communication channels/ways to communicate through currently” (Interview B4, 2023) and our analysis reveals that they are satisfied with the communication overall, but that the ways and channels needs to be refined, adapted or developed to implement DOC into a franchise or organization.

The data collection from both the M1 and M2 findings revealed many ideas on how to implement and adapt DOC with the use of collaboration tools and communication theories. The ideas were; a new developed application or development of the existing intranet; more frequent visits in the boutique or/-and regular reports and reviews to the franchisors from the franchise; sales competitions and education about selling; more frequent conferences and meetings; sharing of research and consumer behaviors;. These ideas that were found convey that the participants distinguish ways to implement DOC, with the use of these ideas, but the question is how it should be done and what course of action, medium or strategy should be utilized to incorporate these ideas to adapt, enhance and implement DOC?

Since it is possible to analyze a DOC with communication theories and evaluate different channels or tools of communication, the difficult assessment is to choose the right strategies and collaborative or collaboration tools or to develop one's own or to create a complete new system that consists of all the ideas and various ways that have been presented that supports in answering the RQ: How can franchisors implement and adapt digital organizational communication with collaborative tools and communication theories to empower franchisees, enhance their self-determination, and foster greater autonomy within the franchise system?

Although, it is important to for the franchise or organization to consider their technological, cultural and social contexts within the organization that the principles presented in (see section 2.3) mentions and to consider the other areas that the principles conveys such as digital literacy, management of communication, selection
of strategies, new tools and media and the ability to influence communication within organizations or franchises. When problems and areas of improvement have been identified, finding the appropriate strategies to try to tackle the identified problems and to assess and evaluate how this can be implemented with the support of a collaborative or collaboration tool.

5.2 Discussion of methods

The decision to utilize semi-structured interviews in this study was based on our selection of participants who possessed valuable insights into the intended problem and area, as well as their willingness to share information (Jacobsen, 2017). We, as authors, believed that combining this selection process with semi-structured interviews and our two theoretical frameworks would provide us with a comprehensive understanding of how the problem manifests within an in-depth analytical case study. As mentioned by Galletta and Cross (2013), the key to successful interviews lies in being flexible and adapting questions based on participant responses. By employing this interview approach, we were able to maintain a framework for addressing the problem while also delving deeper into the participants' desires, thoughts, and future organizational ideas. By incorporating the theoretical frameworks of SDT and FBM into our study, we gained valuable insights into designing effective interview questions and identifying crucial factors during the interview process. These frameworks shed light on participants' motivation levels when engaging in specific tasks and their perceptions of inclusivity within an organization. With a better understanding of these crucial aspects, our research was geared towards fostering greater autonomy within organizations and enhancing SD.

Additionally, as previously mentioned, only 3 out of the 8 interviews were conducted in person. This decision was based on the impractical distances between the remaining units and the limited timeframe available for this thesis. Conducting physical interviews at all locations was not feasible within the given constraints. While conducting the remaining interviews via Zoom was not unprecedented, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of digital interviews. Communicating solely through a computer screen restricts our ability to fully interpret participants' body language, as we could only observe them from the waist up. This limitation made it challenging to draw significant conclusions solely based on non-verbal cues. Furthermore, it is worth noting that some participants may experience a degree of stress during the interviews. This was due to the need to simultaneously manage their store responsibilities while participating in the study, as the only available time for them to engage was at the beginning of their working day.

The reason for implementing Free Listing in the study (refer to section 3.3.2) was primarily to facilitate idea generation and to find ways to address, on how to implement and adapt DOC with the ideas from the participants. Conducting a survey with all franchisees simultaneously posed challenges due to geographical
distances and varying schedules of store owners. Therefore, we opted for a flexible approach that did not require simultaneous participation, allowing individuals to perform the method on different days and from different locations.

Participants were requested to dedicate three sessions of 5 minutes each, resulting in a total time span of 15 minutes, to generate a minimum of 3 ideas. Unfortunately, only 1 store agreed to participate in this additional method although 3 out of 5 units agreed on participating, falling short of our desired number of ideas. However, the ideas generated through this process proved invaluable in complementing the data collected from interviews. Notably, we were able to identify common patterns of desires in response to the study's RQ. The semi-structured interviews instead yielded a substantial amount of data, resulting in 70 pages of transcription from 8 interviews. This extensive dataset allowed for an in-depth exploration of the intended study area. Free Listing served as a valuable supplement, reinforcing the insights gathered through the interviews.
6 Conclusions and future work

In conclusion, implementing and adapting digital organizational communication (DOC) with collaborative tools and communication theories has been shown to be crucial for empowering franchisees and fostering greater autonomy within the franchise system. The aims of the study have been successfully achieved by analyzing communication using theories, evaluating collaborative tools, and exploring strategies for implementing DOC. Through the study, it was demonstrated that involving franchisees in the organizational context, providing relevant information, and encouraging open dialogue can enhance franchisees' self-determination and improve overall performance. The findings support the importance of increased engagement and communication within the franchise system. By strengthening the franchisees' self-determination, it also goes hand in hand with fostering a greater autonomy within the franchise system, as self-determination also results in the individual feeling that what they do has a purpose and a will to continue working according to the determined guidelines.

For future work, measuring the outcomes of implementing collaboration tools or platforms quantitatively and qualitatively can provide further insights into the effectiveness of DOC. Additionally, including multiple stakeholders in research studies and adopting a mixed-method approach can enhance the understanding, validity, and reliability of findings.

Overall, the study has successfully addressed the RQ and achieved its aims, shedding light on the implementation and adaptation of DOC with collaborative tools and communication theories to empower franchisees, enhancing their self-determination and foster greater autonomy within the franchise system.
References


Appendix 1 - Informed consent

Introduktion och syfte

Vi hoppas att du skulle vilja delta i en intervju, för att hjälpa oss att skapa en djupare föreställning kring ämnet vi avsett att undersöka vidare inom. Genom intervjuerna hoppas vi få mer information om ämnet, men också hur just Du ser på det aktuella ämnet och vad Du har för tankar och idéer. Det är helt viktigt att delta på denna intervju och du kan närmast välja att sluta delta under testet. Finns det frågor som du inte vill svara på är det helt ok att inte besvara dessa.

Genomförande

Eftersom att intervjuerna sker på distans behöver du ha tillgång till en dator och program som Google Meet eller Zoom. I övrigt krävs det inte någon förberedelse inför denna intervju från din sida. Dina insikter och åsikter är av särskilt vikt för att kunna hjälpa oss framåt i vårt examensarbete.

Intervjun beräknas att ta cirka 30-45 minuter.

Resultat
Målet med denna intervju är att samla in värdefull data som kommer att liggja till grund för att hjälpa oss att både förstå hur Du ser på problemet, men också för oss att undersöka hur just motivation och gamification kan påverka utformningen av en digital organisationsskommunikation.

Resultatet från respektive intervju kommer att itereras i flera omgångar genom en analys av resultatet samt senare samtackallas i digitala whiteboards i Figmas. De idéer och tankar som Du framför under testets gång kommer att tas med i den fortsatta arbetssprocessen för examensarbete och en designprocess för en kommande digital prototyp, beroende på vad insamlad data kommer att resultera i. Resultatet kommer också att redovisas för medstudenter samt läsare inom Linnéuniversitetet.
Vill du ta del av Dit resultat är du varmt välkommen att maila till m222ni@student.lnu.se alternativt m222ni@student.lnu.se.

Genom att skriva under denna samtyckesblankett godkänner du att dina svar behandlas inom ramen för studien som beskrivs ovan. Du kan när som helst dra tillbaka ditt samtycke och därmed all angiven information genom att maila m222ni@student.lnu.se alternativt m222ni@student.lnu.se. Dina personuppgifter kommer därefter inte längre att bevaras eller behandlas vidare, alla personuppgifter raderas oavsett efter avslutat projekt. Finns det delar som du inte är bekväm med att delta i är det okej att avstå, du kommer ej att bli ifrågasatt. Vi studerar endast ett ämnesområde där det är Dina åsikter och tankar som kan generera insikter och förbipas kunskap. Därefter är det endast det som är av hög vikt för oss och det kommer inte att läggas vikt vid dina personliga uppgifter mer än Dinos geografiska placering.

Du har alltid möjlighet att få information om vad som registreras om dig eller ha synpunkter på behandlingen eller de uppgifter som samlats in genom att kontakta undertecknad på angiven mailadress eller läs stäta datakyddsombud på datakyddsombud@lnu.se. Klager som inte kan lösas med Linnéuniversitetet kan lämnas till integritetskyddsmyndigheten.

Du får gärna ställa frågor innan du skriver under samtyckesblanketten!
Intyg för samtyckesblanketten

Jag har läst föregående information, eller fått det läst för mig. Jag har haft möjlighet att ställa frågor kring detta och de frågor jag har haft har blivit besvarade. Jag intygar mitt samtycke om att vara med i denna studie.

☐ Jag godkänner bli kontaktad efter intervjun om fler frågor behöver besvaras eller ytterligare undersökning genomföras.
☐ Jag godkänner ljudinspelning.
☐ Jag godkänner lagring av ljudinspelning.

Mitt namn:
Min signatur:
Datum:

Jag har på ett korrekt sätt läst ovanstående information för den potentiella deltagaren och gjort mitt bästa för att denna skall förstå att följande kommer ingå i studien:
- Intervjun genomförs för att samla in användarens åsikter och tankar kring det avsedda ämnet att studera.
- Respondenten har möjlighet att själv välja vilka frågor som skall besvaras eller inte.
- Respondenten har också rätt att när som avbryta intervjun.
- Berättat hur resultatet kommer att användas.

Jag intygar också att respondenten har haft möjlighet att ställa frågor kring studien och jag har bevarat dessa så utförligt som möjligt. Jag intygar även att individen inte har blivit tvingad till att delta i studien och samtycke gavs av egen vilja.
En kopia av detta dokument skickas till respondenten.
Mitt namn:
Min signatur:
Datum:
Appendix 2 - Interview questions

Frågor:
1. Hur ofta har Du/ni kontakt med butiken i Västervik idag?
2. Vad kontaktar du butiken i Västervik om främst idag?
3. Hur håller ni främst kontakten idag?
4. Skulle du önska att ni hade mer/mindre kontakt idag?
5. Hur ofta skulle Du vilja ha kontakt med Västerviks-butiken?
   - (tex daglig basis, veckobasis)
6. På vilket sätt hade Du föredragit att kontakten hållas?
7. Känner Du dig motiverad/inte motiverad att kontakta butiken i Västervik idag
   utöver de gånger när det är någonting du behöver hjälp med? (inre motivation)
   - (Kan till exempel vara om du behöver tips på hur man ska länka vid kampanjer,
   event och dylikt)
8. Vad är det som motiverar Dig till att hålla kontakt/inte hålla kontakt med butiken i
   Västervik idag?
9. Skulle du önska att det fanns någon typ av morot för att motivera dig i en digital
   organisationskommunikation?
   - Till exempel att kunna samla poäng, dagliga uppdateringar, få utmärkelser för att
   man till exempel genomför olika utmaningar under veckan som varit,
   statusuppdateringar, höja på varandra
10. Vad hade Du blivit motiverad av att kunna utföra i en digital
    organisationskommunikation?
    - (till exempel utmaningar, poängställning, bli uppmärksammad intern, sättläggning, bli uppmärksammad för en månatlig prestation etc)
11. Finns det någonting Du hade uppskattat att fåge kontinuerlig
    information/inspiration kring som ökar motivationen till kommunikation?
    - (till exempel tips från de andra butikerna på kampanjer, förklaringar på varför
    styling görs på specifika sätt rörande material etc som skickas ut från Anna och
    Fanny, tex veckovis?)
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